

# EPDs Beneficial To Breeding Goals

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Expected Progeny Differences (EPDs) are becoming increasingly important to successful breeding programs as demand increases for higher-quality, cost-efficient cattle. EPDs have been used in the dairy industry for a long time, but it's relatively recent that the beef

industry has relied heavily on them.

Today, most breed associations maintain genetic information on all recorded animals. The material is available to commercial breeders simply for the asking, and most times at no charge.

Dr. John Hough, director of education and research for the American Polled Hereford Association, said EPDs are not hard to understand if a few basic principles are known.

"The variability between animals is never totally genetic.

EPDs are simply predictions of what is expected to occur when specific animals are bred. The more performance information that is available from an animal and its relatives, the more accurate are the EPDs."

EPDs are calculated using in-

formation from three sources: the individual animal's own performance records, performance of its relatives and most importantly, the performance of its progeny. All EPDs are based on an animal's relative performance compared to its contemporaries.

Information compiled in EPD records can be used to help evaluate a number of traits for your herd. EPDs are maintained for birth weight, weaning weight, yearling weight, milk production, milk and growth, and scrotal circumference. Calving ease and other traits are sometimes recorded as well.

Hough says buying bulls with complete EPD records makes substantial economic sense. By knowing what type of offspring the bull has the capability to produce, you can better predict performance from your herd and begin making herd improvements more efficiently.

It is important to be aware of EPD accuracies, which can vary among bulls. A breed's sire summary will generally define the accuracy values of each animal and, some breed associations have started including complete histories of each bull listed in their summaries.

Hough emphasizes EPDs are a good tool only when used with complete understanding.

"One of the most important things to remember," he said, "is not to compare EPDs across breeds. EPD values are only correct within a single breed."

Additional information on EPDs and how to use them as a cost-cutting management tool can be obtained from your county extension agent, your land-grant university, or a breed association.

## Hog Producers Attend Seminar

SUNBURY (Nortumberland Co.) — More than 40 hog producers attended a meeting recently to improve swine production efficiency sponsored by Northeastern Farm Credit and the Sunbury Animal Hospital.

The program included a videotaped presentation of selected parts from the 1993 Swine Production Short Course from Purdue University. Topics included lean growth modeling, starter pig nutrition, disease control, and worker health and were facilitated by Dr. James Temple, veterinarian at the Sunbury Animal Hospital.

"We are glad we attended. The seminar was very informative and worth our time," said Randy and

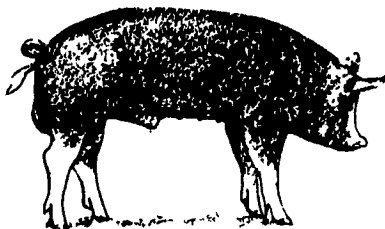
Joelle Arnold, hog producers from Milton, "especially the information on workers health."

Neal Wertz, a hog operator from Danville, believes there is a need for more seminars similar to this one for improved swine production management. "I was very pleased with the large turnout. I feel there is a real need in our industry for information on related issues to improve the swine production efficiency of our operations," said Wertz.

Temple agrees. Temple came up with the idea for the meeting and met with Wertz. They contacted Bill Hartman at Northeastern Farm Credit, ACA, to help sponsor and conduct the meeting.

Videotapes from Purdue University on a wide variety of topics can be borrowed from the Sunbury Animal Hospital. A few of the more than 30 topics include

"Processing Baby Pigs," "Water Source and Supply," "Manure Storage," and "Animal Manure as a Plant Nutrient Source."





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